

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: FWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime (406-461-0587)

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, October 16 - October 22, 2010

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2009 annual report) can be found on the FWP website.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

Hunters and private landowners are especially encouraged to report observations of wolves or wolf sign to FWP through the online feature at <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf> (look for the green Report a Wolf box), by mailing a pre-printed post card available at license agents, or calling the nearest FWP office.

Flights: Ross flew in the Gallatin Mtns and Madison area on 10/19. Lance flew north of Helena on 10/21. Lance flew in the Big Hole on 10/20. Laudon flew in northwest Montana on 10/20-22.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On 10/15, WS killed a wolf near Hall (near Drummond), as previously authorized by FWP after WS confirmed a cow was killed on private land during an investigation on 10/11. Efforts to remove the remaining wolves are ongoing.

On 10/19, WS confirmed a calf as being injured by wolves and after the investigation it was euthanized. This was in the Mill Creek area in the Paradise Valley south of Livingston. FWP authorized removal of 2 wolves from this pack which is estimated to be 7 total. One wolf was killed on 10/21. Efforts to remove the second wolf are ongoing. Previously in this area, WS confirmed a calf as being killed by wolves on 5/11. At that time, FWP authorized removal of 2 wolves. None were killed and the 45-day control period had ended on 6/25.

Outreach and Education

On 10/18, FWP Communications and Education Bureau Kurt Cunningham attended the Montana Association of Student Council's Annual Conference in Great Falls and gave an update / answered questions during the optional "Hot Topics" session. About 600 students attended the conference.

On 10/19, FWP Madison / Gallatin area biologist Julie Cunningham gave a program about FWP et al.'s work on wolf / ungulate relationships in SW MT at the Skyline Sportsman Club meeting in Butte. About 75 people attended.

On 10/19, Bradley gave a program at the local chapter meeting of the Society for American Foresters in Missoula. About 40 people attended.

Research Activities

FWP announces that a paper has been peer reviewed and accepted for publication in the journal *Wildlife Research*. It is undergoing final editing and formatting and will appear in press in the coming months. The paper is entitled: Biological, technical, and social aspects of applying electrified fladry for livestock protection from wolves (*Canis lupus*).

FWP congratulates University of Montana MS student Lindsey Rich on receiving the Best Student Paper Award at The Wildlife Society's annual conference earlier this month. The Wildlife Society is an independent organization of wildlife professionals from across the U.S. and elsewhere. Members work in the public and private sector and in a variety of positions from research, management, to policy. Rich has been studying the use of hunter reports to monitor wolf populations in Montana. She will be defending her Master's thesis later in November. Final results of the study will be summarized in a later wolf weekly and in the annual report.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

Nothing to report at this time.

Other Updates

Bitterroot Wolf 10(j) Proposal:

On 10/7, the FWP Commission approved FWP to seek public comment and obtain scientific peer review on a proposal to remove wolves in the West Fork of the Bitterroot due to unacceptable impacts of wolf predation on the elk herd (which is not meeting population objectives for calf recruitment or total elk numbers). The complete proposal can be found under "Opportunity for Public Comment" found on the Hunting page of the FWP website fwp.mt.gov.

Proposal details:

- Reduce wolf numbers in HD 250 (West Fork of Bitterroot) from the minimum of 24 counted in December 2009 to a year-end minimum of 12 wolves represented by 2 – 3 packs from 2010 through 2015; objective = 12 wolves in 2-3 packs in HD 250
- 100 "agents of the state" are drawn from a pool of applicants, not more than 10% nonresidents
- Hunting only from one half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset; no baiting or electronic calling/amplification; 12 hour reporting with 48-hour check-in
- Hunting license purchase required to keep pelt and skull
- Fall 2010/Winter 2011 season to start with USFWS approval not before Dec 15, 2010 and running until quota is met, not later than Feb 28, 2011;
- 5-year proposal to USFWS with annual FWP Commission process and rules; proposed management options available for annual definitions by FWP Commission include fair chase hunting or trapping by the public, control actions by agency personnel or designees, or any combination approved by the Commission

Public comments sought:

- Deadline for public comment is 5pm Wednesday November 10, 2010
- Written comments can be sent to: FWP – Wildlife Bureau, Attn: Public Comment, POB 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701.

- Electronic comments can be submitted by cutting and pasting the following link into your web browser line: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/D3ZL3GL>

Pending public comment and peer reviews, FWP may advance a final proposal to the FWP Commission at the next meeting November 18 in Helena. If approved by the FWP Commission, FWP would submit a final 10(j) proposal to the USFWS for federal consideration and approval. FWP would seek expedited review. USFWS can approve the proposal or deny the proposal.

Northern Rockies Delisting Litigation

On 10/1, FWP filed its appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, seeking to overturn the Missoula District Court ruling that returned the region's wolf population to the federal endangered species list. The federal government and Idaho also filed appeals.

Background: On 8/6, federal Endangered Species Act protections were reinstated through a ruling from the federal court. The court ruled that the federal Endangered Species Act does not allow the federal government to subdivide a distinct population segment so that a species is listed in part of it and delisted in the other part. The ruling stated that the wolf must either be listed or delisted as one unit within the Northern Rockies region. Further, given that the current Wyoming wolf management plan and regulatory mechanisms are not approved by the federal government and are considered inadequate, federal protections must be reinstated throughout the region.

Wolves across northern Montana are now legally reclassified as federally endangered. Wolves across southern Montana are reclassified as experimental, non-essential. Different federal regulations apply to each area. See <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf> for information about the federal regulations and other updates.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

LLRMB held its fall board meeting on October 18th.

For agendas and minutes of previous meetings, see the Board's website: www.llrmb.mt.gov. Look under Board and Meetings on the left navigation bar. Agendas and minutes from previous meetings are available at [Montana Department of Livestock](http://liv.mt.gov). The program coordinator can be reached at 444-5609.

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To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP online. Use the following shortcut link and be sure to update your bookmarks: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana at the statewide office: 657-6464. Or, call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock death loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp>. Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 444-5609.